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ABSTRACT

A study was conducted to understand better a common problem in job development efforts in rehabilitation--the poor returns of mailed-out surveys and, therefore, identification of few job leads for further cultivation. Two experimental job development investigations were used, one with large firms and one with small firms, to examine the effect of varying channels or modes of communication and contact persons in the organization on job development outcomes. Large firms (50 or more employees) were selected from an Arkansas mailing list at random and assigned to one of four conditions that varied in the channel or mode of contact (face-to-face versus mail) and receiver (owner/manager versus personnel manager). Small firms were selected at random from a Chamber of Commerce directory for Northwestern Arkansas and tested on the effects of different channels or modes of contact--the mail approach versus a mail and telephone procedure. The study found that procedures do exist to improve the return rate for job development mail surveys, e.g. send an influential appeal letter stressing agency credibility, agency status, and potential incentives for the employer, along with a one-page survey that is easy to complete with a stamped, self-addressed envelope. For large businesses with personnel managers, a combination of mail and telephone contacts with the owner/manager and personnel manager or mail, phone, and face-to-face contacts with the personnel manager are promising variations. (KC)

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A Comparison of Job Development Strategies in Rehabilitation

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Significant Findings

1) Contrary to findings in previous research, procedures do exist to improve the return rate typical of job development mail surveys, e.g.,
   a. Draft an influential appeal letter stressing agency credibility (expert power), agency status (referent power), and the potential incentives (positive and negative reinforcers) for the employer (reward and coercive powers).
   b. Enclose a brief one-page survey that is easy for the employer to complete.
   c. Enclose a stamped, self-addressed envelope.
2) For large businesses with personnel managers, embellishments of the previously stated procedure, i.e., a combination of mail and phone contacts with the owner/manager and personnel manager, or mail, phone, and face-to-face contacts with the personnel manager, are promising variations. These approaches may result in employers submitting more jobs as potential employment situations for individuals with disabilities.
3) For small businesses, phone alerts, contacting companies in advance to identify the appropriate person to receive the survey, did not improve survey return rates or the number of jobs listed.
4) Phone follow-ups, i.e., administering the survey over the telephone, resulted in a dramatic increase in the number

of surveys completed by small firms but a disappointing number of additional job leads (one).

5) Contacting employers regarding long-range employment possibilities also resulted in identification of four immediate job openings. Upon notification of a job opening, rehabilitation field counselors must act immediately to contact the employer and to refer a qualified rehabilitation client.

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A Comparison of Job Development Strategies in Rehabilitation

According to Gordon (1979), job development represents a type of persuasive communication. Hence, a number of factors which affect the impact of persuasion are relevant, e.g., attributes of the source of the message, the content and structure of the message, the channel (media or modality) by which the message is transmitted, the characteristics of the receiver, and the nature of the issue contained in the message.

This model of persuasive communications can be applied to better understand a common problem in job development efforts in rehabilitation, i.e., the poor returns of mailed out surveys and, therefore, identification of few job leads for further cultivation. In one job development study, Vandergoot (1976) randomly assigned employers to one of two experimental mail survey conditions. In the first condition employers (N = 50) received a traditional letter describing the rehabilitation facility and its vocational training and placement services. The second approach (N = 50) involved a special motivational appeal delivered by way of a letter emphasizing a) the research nature of the project, b) the fact that the project was not a fund raising effort, and c) the endorsement of the project by locally prominent businessmen. Return rates from business and industry for the enclosed mail survey were extremely low, two percent for the traditional approach and six percent for the motivational approach.

Cates (1981) also reported little success with a mail survey. Using the strategy of varying the appeal in the initial letter to employers, Cates (1981) created four experimental conditions. The letter to the control group (N = 100) emphasized vocational training and placement services of the rehabilitation agency. A second group of employers (N = 100) received letters stressing the "plight" of individuals with disabilities who are seeking work. The third experimental group (N = 100) received a letter validating the rehabilitation agency's credibility, i.e., the National Alliance of Businessmen was quoted in the letter as endorsing the program. Finally, the fourth experimental group (N = 100) received a letter stressing the affirmative action responsibilities of the employer. Overall response rate for the four conditions was 18.75% with the data supporting the superiority of the affirmative action approach. However, only three job openings resulted from telephone follow-ups to each of the groups. In closing, Cates (1981) concurred with Vandergoot (1976) regarding the minimal effectiveness of mail surveys.

In reflecting on the low return rate in his study, Vandergoot (1976) identified several factors which undoubtedly influenced the response of the business community. For example, the local unemployment rate was high (8.3%). Furthermore, several other programs were competing for the attention of employers, e.g., programs to increase the employment of veterans and welfare mothers. Reflecting on variables in the

model of persuasive communication, Vandergoot (1976) also questioned the effectiveness of an impersonal approach such as mailing out a letter and noted that person-to-person contact was probably necessary to activate the motivational appeal implicit in one of his experimental approaches. According to Vandergoot, "It is unknown, however, whether direct, personal contacts with businessmen, as opposed to mailings could have done any better in increasing the number of interested businessmen. A study comparing a mailing with a personal contact approach seems warranted" (Vandergoot, 1976, p. 75).

In essence, Vandergoot (1976) suggested that a different channel or method of transmitting the job development message would be more effective, i.e., personal contact with the employer. Several other observers of job development (Garza & Mansolo, 1981; Usdane, 1976; Zadny, 1980) have also stressed that personal contact with the employer is critical if job development efforts are to be successful.

In an extensive review of the social psychology literature, McGuire (1969) noted a number of reasons why personal contact is beneficial. For example, it allows for two-way communication in which the source can provide feedback regarding concerns and misconceptions expressed by the receiver. In addition, personal contact enables the source to tailor arguments to the needs of a particular audience as well as to provide "immediate rewards to the receiver for incipient

agreement responses." By providing less opportunity for selective avoidance on the receiver's part, personal communication also increases the attention which the receiver must give the message (McGuire, 1969, p. 233). In describing his social impact theory, Latané (1981) stated several reasons for the influence of personal contact. According to Latané, social impact or, in this case, persuasion, is a function of the strength, immediacy, and number of sources attempting to affect a target. Personal contact, therefore, by a source may result in increases in strength and immediacy in contrast to more impersonal approaches such as mail surveys.

Another factor in the persuasion model with the potential to influence the success of job development is the receiver. For example, since businesses can be considered formal organizations characterized by vertical communications, the probability is high that messages entered at the top (the owner/manager) will reach lower levels (Bettinghaus, 1980). Hence, efforts to convince the owner or manager of the merits of hiring individuals with disabilities may encourage those lower in the organizational structure, e.g., the personnel manager, to cooperate more fully.

In the methodology section to follow, two experimental job development investigations are described, one with large firms and one with small firms. These studies examined the effect of varying channels or modes of communication and/or contact persons in the organization (receivers) on job

development outcomes. For all employers involved, the issue, content, structure, and source of the message were the same. Based on French and Raven's (1967) definition of social power, the appeal from project staff stressed such concerns as the expertise and status of the source (expert and referent power respectively), the benefits of participating in the program (reward power), and the potential affirmative action benefits of participation (a weak application of coercive power in order to avoid psychological reactance {Brehm, 1966; 1972} on the receiver's part). Following Bettinghaus' (1980) recommendations, the message placed special emphasis on what the project could do for the employer. In every case, the underlying issue was the same, i.e., the importance of increasing employment of individuals with disabilities.

Methodology

Large firms (50 employees or more). From the 1982 Northwest Arkansas Personnel Association mailing list, large firms with personnel managers were selected for the study. These firms were assigned at random to one of four conditions which varied in the (a) channel or mode of contact (face-to-face versus mail) and (b) receiver (owner/manager versus personnel manager). The conditions for the large firm experiment are presented in Figure 1 and described in detail in the material to follow:

a) Condition 1 - The personnel manager (receiver) received the appeal letter (See Appendix A), a job development

survey (See Appendix B) to complete, and a stamped, self-addressed envelope (mail channel).

b) Condition 2 - The personnel manager (receiver) received the appeal letter which included a suggested time and date for a visit (face-to-face channel) from a project member. A project member then called to answer any questions and to confirm the time to visit. During the visit, the staff member briefly discussed the points in the letter and left a survey for the personnel manager to return in a stamped, self-addressed envelope.

c) Condition 3 - After sending the appeal letter, a project member telephoned the owner/manager (receiver) to answer any questions about the project and to solicit both the name of the company's personnel manager and permission to write the personnel manager about the project. The letter to the personnel manager (mail channel) indicated that the owner had given the project permission to request the personnel manager's assistance with the study. The personnel manager was asked to complete the enclosed survey and return it in a stamped, self-addressed envelope.

d) Condition 4 - The appeal letter which included a tentative time for a visit by a project member was sent to the owner or manager (receiver). A project member then called to confirm the time for the visit, visited the owner or manager (face-to-face channel), and asked for permission to contact the personnel manager by name regarding cooperation in

Figure 1

Experimental Conditions: Large Firms

Conditions	Contacts
1	Personnel manager as receiver; mail as channel.
2	Personnel manager as receiver; face-to-face as channel.
3	Owner/manager as receiver; mail as channel.
4	Owner/manager as receiver; face-to-face as channel.

the study. Subsequently, a letter was sent to the personnel manager indicating that the owner had given permission for the personnel manager to be contacted by the project. The personnel manager was asked to return the enclosed survey in a stamped, self-addressed envelope.

Due to the combined effects of face-to-face communication with the top person in the organization, condition four was expected to be the most effective in soliciting participation of employers. Since conditions two and three involved either a face-to-face communication or contact with the top person, they were expected to be equally effective and superior to condition one.

Small firms (49 employees or less). Since project staff had time to visit only the larger firms, a second study was designed for small companies. From the 1981 Chamber of Commerce Directory for Northwest Arkansas, small businesses (N = 93) were assigned at random to one of three different conditions. In regard to variables in the persuasion model, this study concentrated on the effects of different channels or modes of contact, e.g., the mail approach versus a mail and phone procedure. The groups were as follows:

a) Condition 1 - The owner/manager was sent the standard appeal letter with a survey and stamped, self-addressed envelope enclosed (mail as channel).

b) Condition 2 - The standard message, survey, and return envelope were mailed to the owner/manager. Those individuals

not responding by mail were involved in a telephone administration of the survey (mail and phone follow-up as channels; see Appendix C for the phone follow-up materials).

c) Condition 3 - A "phone alert" preceded the standard mailing. In the phone alert, a project member called the receptionist or appropriate secretary to identify the proper person to receive the survey (mail and phone alerts as channels). Envelopes were then typed with the notation "Attention: Mr. or Mrs. _____."

Analysis. Variables for assessing the effectiveness of the approach included the number of returned surveys, the number of companies listing jobs on the survey, and the number of hard to fill/high employment potential jobs identified. Chi Square analyses were used to compare the differential effectiveness of the approaches.

Results

Results of the job development survey are presented in two sections, (a) results with large companies with personnel managers (50 employees or more) and (b) results with small companies (49 employees or less).

Large Firms

Results for the mail survey with large companies with personnel managers are presented in Table 1. Based on the information in Table 1, it is apparent that survey return rates were similar across the four conditions. In each case, a majority of those contacted returned the survey. Return

Table 1

Large Companies with Personnel Managers

(50 Employees or More)

Conditions	N	Companies Returning Survey[a]		Companies Listing One or More Jobs[b]		Total Number of Jobs Listed[c]
		#	%	#	%	
1	17	9	53	2	12	2
2	20	13	65	6	25	10
3	22	12	55	7	32	14
4	19	10	53	4	21	5

[a] $\chi^2 = .82$ (3df), $p = .84$

[b] $\chi^2 = 2.59$ (3df), $p = .46$

[c] $\chi^2 = 10.91$ (3df), $p = .03$

rates for all conditions (53% - 65%) exceeded those reported in other job development studies (18.75%, Cates, 1981; 2-6%, Vandergoot, 1976). Hence, the procedure used in the study, e.g., 1) an initial letter reflecting certain social psychological principles, 2) a brief, easy to complete survey, and 3) a stamped, self-addressed envelope appears to encourage employer completion and return of a job development survey.

Since the purpose of the survey was to develop jobs, one important criterion for judging the utility of the approaches is the number of companies submitting job possibilities in each condition. As data in Table 1 indicate, the four conditions resulted in similar numbers of employers listing a job or jobs (X^2 (3df) = 2.59, p = .46). Hence, the simplest approach of an appeal letter, survey, and self-addressed, stamped envelope would be the recommended approach for simply involving companies. Contrary to the hypothesis for the large firm study, varying the channel or receiver had no significant effect on survey return rates or on number of companies participating.

The utility of the various approaches can, however, be viewed from another perspective, the total number of jobs listed by companies in each of the four conditions. To test the assumption that each condition contributed a similar number of job leads, the goodness of fit (Ferguson, 1976) between observed and expected frequencies was examined. The resulting X^2 value was 10.91 (3df), p = .03. Conditions

deviating most from the expected frequency were the first in terms of fewer jobs and the second and third in terms of more jobs.

Evidence, therefore, suggests that the personnel manager is the critical receiver and that his/her participation is enhanced by a more personalized approach (face-to-face channel). In addition, involvement of the personnel manager may be increased somewhat if a prior contact (mail and phone) with the owner/manager (receiver) has resulted in the owner's endorsement of the personnel manager's participation. Neither intensive contact with the firm (face-to-face contact with the owner) nor minimal contact (a mail survey to the personnel manager) results in improved participation. Overall, the most effective strategy would include use of mail and phone channels with the owner/manager (receiver) followed by a mail contact with the personnel manager.

Table 2 presents the job titles obtained as a result of the survey of large firms. The Director of the local sheltered workshop and two staff members (Director of Client Services and Director of Work Activities) rated the appropriateness of each of these jobs for work evaluation and simulation in the workshop. In making the appropriateness decision, the raters considered three criteria, 1) suitability of work conditions for individuals with disabilities, 2) the workshop's capability to simulate those jobs, and 3) the probability of clients developing satisfactory job skills. Nine jobs were

Table 2

Job Titles Obtained as a Result of Survey

Condition 1 (N = 17)	Condition 2 (N = 20)	Condition 3 (N = 22)	Condition 4 (N = 19)
1. General Line Work: Packing Chicken Patties, etc.	1. Food Processing Line Workers	1. Die Cast	1. Live Hanger
2. Bill Collector at Drive-In Window for Utility Company	2. Reporter	2. Laminations	2. Box Stacker
	3. Motor Newspaper Delivery	3. Electronics Technician	3. Misc. Sub-Assembly Operators
	4. Eviscerating and Line Labor	4. Punch Press Operator	4. Fitter - Welder
	5. Stuffers	5. Skilled Maintenance	5. Sewing Machine Operator
	6. Cryovac	6. Vaccinating and Debeaking	
	7. Meter Tester	7. KFC Saw	
	8. Sewing Machine Operator	8. Venting	
	9. Ripper	9. Crop Pullers	
	10. Bench Assembler	10. Hock Lockers	
		11. Laborers	
		12. Upholsterers	
		13. General Labor	
		14. Production Operator	

rated as appropriate for simulation and training in the workshop (see Table 3).

Small Firms

Results from the contacts with small employers are presented in Table 4. Somewhat higher than figures reported in other studies (2% to 19%), mail return rates for the one-page survey ranged from 19% (Condition 2 before phone follow-up) to 35% (Condition 1). If survey return rates are used as the sole criterion, the phone follow-up condition is clearly the superior approach (X^2 = 21.31 (2df), p = .001). Through phone follow-ups, project members obtained survey responses from 25 companies (6 by mail and 19 by phone) in the second experimental condition. However, the purpose of the study was to obtain job leads, not simply to contact employers. Since the 19 phone follow-ups resulted in only one additional job possibility, one would question their utility particularly since many of the contacts were toll calls.

In terms of survey replies, the phone alert approach (26% return rate) was no more effective than the mail survey procedure (35% return rate). Based on the results of this study, it would appear that the phone alert strategy does not merit the additional time and money it requires. However, results of a phone alert might have been improved if the person who would complete the survey was contacted. As used in this study, the phone alert consisted of contacting the receptionist for the name of the person to receive the survey.

Similar across all conditions, the number of small companies

Table 3

Number of Appropriate Jobs for Project Purposes

(Large Companies)

Conditions	Number of Jobs	Yes	Maybe	No
1	2	-	1	1
2	10	2	3	5
3	14	5	5	4
4	5	2	1	2

Table 4

Small Companies

(49 or Fewer Employees)

Conditions	N	Companies Returning Survey[a] #	%	Companies Listing One or More Jobs[c] #	%	Total Number of Jobs Listed
1	31	11	35	3	10	3
2	31	25[b]	81[b]	4	13	5
3	31	8	26	3	10	5

[a] $X^2 = 21.31$ (2df), $p = .001$

[b] 6 by mail (19%), 19 by phone follow-up (61%)

[c] $X^2 = .22$ (2df), $p = .89$

listing one or more jobs and the total number of jobs listed are not particularly impressive. Approximately ten percent of those contacted listed a hard to fill/high turnover job. Of course, securing even a few placements as a result of these job leads would cast another light on the results of this job development strategy with small employers.

For small firms, it appears that an explanatory letter, survey, and self-addressed, stamped envelope is as effective a job development strategy as those involving a phone follow-up or phone alert. This conclusion is further supported by the data in Table 5 which indicate the appropriateness of job leads for project purposes. Therefore, relative to the strategies used in this study, counselors should use the most efficient approach, i.e., sending an explanatory letter with an enclosed survey and a self-addressed, stamped envelope.

One Last Note

As a result of this study, several opportunities for immediate placement of individuals with disabilities were identified. These positions included three clerical jobs with large corporations in the area and a drive-in window bill collector for a local utility. Informed of these openings, the local rehabilitation field office referred clients to three of the four positions. Unfortunately, the job at the local utility company had been filled by a nondisabled person by the time a rehabilitation client applied. A local food processor hired a rehabilitation client for one of the clerical positions.

Table 5

Number of Appropriate Jobs for Project Purposes

(Small Companies)

Conditions	N	Yes	Maybe	No
1	6	3	1	2
2	6	0	0	6
3	5	2	1	2

The second clerical position with a large international corporation was retracted by the company. No contact was made with the employer, an independent insurance agency, regarding the third clerical position. By responding appropriately to three of the four job leads, the rehabilitation field office secured one immediate placement as a result of this job development effort.

Discussion

Large Firms

Results of the experiment with large firms having personnel managers support the use of an appeal letter, mail survey, and a preparatory phone call to the owner/manager or a personal visit to the personnel manager. If owners are contacted, they should first receive the appeal letter followed by a phone call to explain the project's objectives and to obtain permission to contact the personnel manager. The personnel manager could then be sent the survey and appeal letter which indicates that the owner/manager sanctions the personnel manager's participation in the project. If only the personnel manager is involved, it appears that a personal visit by the job developer is in order.

Results of the large firm study did not support the hypothesis that face-to-face contact (channel) with the owner (receiver) would result in the most positive job development outcomes. By the same token, face-to-face contact (channel) with the personnel manager (receiver) coupled with mail and

phone contact (channel) with the owner/manager (receiver) appears to have beneficial results. Depending on constraints of time and money, rehabilitation counselors could periodically follow this approach with a few selected industries or with a variety of companies in their local area.

For large companies with personnel managers, the importance of a carefully designed appeal letter and survey should not be lost. This letter should be written in sufficient detail to convince company representatives that the project has the potential to provide good employees at a minimal cost to the organization. This observation is consistent with the basic theme of social exchange theory (Deutsch & Krauss, 1965; Simpson, 1976), i.e., social behavior is a function of anticipated reinforcement, as well as with other reasons why organizations adopt innovations (Gordon, 1979, pp. 121-123). For example, in this job development project, companies could participate on a small scale, one employee at a time at no cost, while still remaining in complete control of the hiring process. In addition, the procedures for preparing clients for employment represented commonly accepted practices acceptable to "organizational gatekeepers."

Small Firms

Results of the experiment with small firms support application of the principle of parsimony to job development with smaller companies that do not have personnel managers. Overall, the outcomes of the basic mail approach--appeal letter, one

page survey, and stamped self-addressed return envelope--were as desirable as those of other approaches. For example, although the telephone follow-up to nonresponding employers resulted in a great many more surveys being completed, it was not effective in gaining additional job leads. The time and effort involved in making 24 telephone calls, many of which were toll calls, to secure one additional job lead represents a very poor investment.

When confined only to a receptionist or secretary, the phone alert condition proved to be unproductive. Not only did the approach not increase response rate over the "mail only" condition, it resulted in no additional job leads. One possible way to improve this approach would be to talk directly with the person in the business who would complete the survey. Of course, the job developer would then run the risk of the employer declining to participate further in the project. Overall, the time and money spent in making these phone alerts apparently would have been much better spent elsewhere.

Observations From Both Studies

Another noteworthy finding of this study is the high rate of survey returns, 53% to 65% from large firms and 27% to 29% from small firms. These return rates speak well for the effectiveness of the appeal letter and survey particularly when the high level of local unemployment (7% to 9%) is considered. One might speculate as to the reasons for the large survey return rates.

First, the letter communicated numerous reasons why employers should participate in the study. These reasons were presented in terms of the bases of social power previously discussed. The University of Arkansas and Arkansas Rehabilitation Research and Training Center were introduced as reasonably high status and creditable sources (referent and expert power). In addition, the letter mentioned concrete incentives (reward power) for participation, e.g., stable and loyal employees for hard to fill/high turnover jobs. Finally, the letter made brief reference to the role that the project might play in helping firms meet their affirmative action commitments (coercive power).

By reaffirming the company's freedom to hire whomever they wished, the letter attempted to guard against a reactance effect, e.g., perceived loss of one's freedom in an important area of presumed competence which results in negative affect toward the source and message (Brehm, 1966; 1972; West & Wicklund, 1980). This reactance effect can occur if excessive emphasis is placed on civil rights or affirmative action requirements for hiring individuals from minority groups. However, other research (Cates, 1981) has indicated that, if handled appropriately, reminders of a firm's legal obligations can be effective in stimulating action.

It should also be noted that some employers expressed very positive opinions about the project's approach and the employment potential of individuals with disabilities. Several

employers even provided testimonials as to the productivity and loyalty of individuals they had hired who had disabilities. These employer responses seemed consistent with recent research which indicates that employers claim to be far more concerned about a person's productivity than about the person's disability history (Ruffner, 1981; Zadny, 1980). By the same token, only a small percentage of employers actually listed a job or jobs for consideration. One should not forget the conclusion of a literature review completed by the Urban Institute (1975, p. 324) that the majority of employers do not have favorable attitudes regarding hiring individuals with disabilities.

Of course, some of the employer endorsement of the project may reflect an altruism effect, i.e., helping those who deserve it (Gruder, Romer, & Korth, 1978). Because altruism is often limited by estimates of cost or utility (Piliavin, Piliavin, & Rodin, 1975), the traditional safeguards built into the project, e.g., a) employer control of the hiring and b) project commitment to screen and follow-up trainees, become even more important.

Finally, one should not underemphasize the serendipitous events occurring as a result of the job development survey. Four immediate job openings were identified and referred to the local vocational rehabilitation field office. By following up on three of the four possibilities, rehabilitation field counselors secured one successful clerical placement in a local poultry processing company. Although a very limited sample,

these four job leads underscore the significance for placement of the old saying "Time is of the essence." For example, one of the jobs was filled before a rehabilitation client could apply and another was not checked on by a counselor in an appropriate period of time.

Conclusions

For job development with larger companies, the process of an appeal letter to the owner (receiver) followed by a phone contact with the owner and a subsequent tailored mailing (channel) to the personnel manager including an appeal letter, one page survey, and stamped, self-addressed envelope is one recommended strategy. Another feasible approach involves a series of mail, phone, and face-to-face contacts (channel) with the personnel manager (receiver). In the initial phases of job development, smaller firms can be approached through the mail (appeal letter, one-page survey, and self-addressed, stamped envelope). As used in this study, additional activities such as phone alerts or phone follow-ups did not improve job development results significantly.

Regardless of the size of business being contacted, the appeal letter used should stress the advantages to the employer of participating in the project by completing the enclosed survey. Every effort should be made to indicate that the employer controls whether or not an individual is finally hired. The employer should be assured that participation will result in additional referrals of job ready individuals whose early job

performance will be monitored by project representatives.

Finally, as all rehabilitation counselors know, job leads require immediate action. The more time that passes between counselor notification of a job opening and and counselor action the more chance there is that someone other than a rehabilitation client will obtain the job.

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APPENDIX A

Sample of job development letters
sent in Condition 3 to owner/managers
and personnel managers

Condition 3 -- Large firms with personnel managers

Letter to owner/manager

Dear Owner/Manager:

Since March, 1965, the Rehabilitation Services Administration has funded a nationally recognized research center in vocational rehabilitation at the University of Arkansas, Fayetteville. Co-sponsored by the University and Arkansas Rehabilitation Services, this program, the Arkansas Rehabilitation Research and Training Center, has developed many successful rehabilitation techniques.

To enhance the employability of individuals with disabilities, the Arkansas Rehabilitation Research and Training Center is implementing an experimental program benefiting both industries and disabled citizens of Northwest Arkansas. The project has several purposes: to provide employers with qualified, well-trained workers for high turnover or high employment potential jobs, to help employers meet affirmative action and personal commitments to nondiscriminatory hiring, and to prepare individuals with disabilities for satisfying and productive work roles.

The word "disability" automatically makes one think of limitations. But, some interesting facts exist about workers who have a disability. In 1976, Du Pont Corporation reported that properly placed people with disabilities had greater job stability and less turnover than persons without disabilities. Specifically, Du Pont Corporation noted that, when compared with nondisabled workers,

* 79% of its workers with disabilities had average or better than average attendance records.

* 93% had equivalent or lower turnover rates, and

* 96% were rated average or better in safety, both on and off the job.

In a recent telephone survey,

* 89% to 98% of the employers responding in two large cities (Portland and San Francisco) rated the performance of employees with disabilities as average or above average.

In an effort to meet the needs of employers and disabled citizens of Northwest Arkansas, we would appreciate your assistance with an experimental project designed to help people with disabilities enter the work force. In the next few weeks, we plan to take the following steps:

1. Identify high turnover/hard to fill or high employment potential positions in industry and business in Northwest Arkansas.
2. Identify the major tasks and production level standards of those jobs.
3. Institute vocational training in those positions at Abilities Unlimited Sheltered Workshop in Fayetteville.
4. Train workshop clients in the positions to insure that they can meet required job standards.
5. Recommend selected individuals for employment in participating industries.
6. Provide follow-up assistance to trainees and employers.

We would like to call you soon and explain our project in more detail. At that time, we would appreciate the name of the person in charge of hiring who could help us by completing a brief mail survey. The purpose of the survey is to learn more about employment opportunities in Northwest Arkansas. Completion and return of the confidential survey or any further participation in this program in no way commits you to hiring any of our trainees. You are the best judge of the capabilities of our trainees.

Research resulting from this project will discuss only general findings. No business or industry will be identified in any way by name. We will be happy to share with you the results of our study.

Thank you for taking time to read about our program. We are looking forward to talking with you in the future.

Sincerely,

Richard T. Roessler, Ph.D.
Professor of Rehabilitation
Education
Senior Research Scientist
Arkansas Rehabilitation
Research & Training Center

Condition 3 -- Large firms with personnel managers

Letter to personnel manager

Dear Personnel Manager:

_____ (owner/manager) indicated that we might contact you for assistance.

Since March, 1965, the Rehabilitation Services Administration has funded a nationally recognized research center in vocational rehabilitation at the University of Arkansas, Fayetteville. Co-sponsored by the University and Arkansas Rehabilitation Services, this program, the Arkansas Rehabilitation Research and Training Center, has developed many successful rehabilitation techniques.

To enhance the employability of individuals with disabilities, the Arkansas Rehabilitation Research and Training Center is implementing an experimental program benefiting both industries and disabled citizens of Northwest Arkansas. The project has several purposes: to provide employers with qualified, well-trained workers for high turnover or high employment potential jobs, to help employers meet affirmative action and personal commitments to nondiscriminatory hiring, and to prepare individuals with disabilities for satisfying and productive work roles.

The word "disability" automatically makes one think of limitations. But, some interesting facts exist about workers who have a disability. In 1976, Du Pont Corporation reported that properly placed people with disabilities had greater job stability and less turnover than persons without disabilities. Specifically, Du Pont Corporation noted that, when compared with nondisabled workers,

* 79% of its workers with disabilities had average or better than average attendance records.

* 93% had equivalent or lower turnover rates, and

* 96% were rated average or better in safety, both on and off the job.

In a recent telephone survey,

* 89% to 98% of the employers responding in two large cities (Portland and San Francisco) rated the performance of employees with disabilities as average or above average.

In an effort to meet the needs of employers and disabled citizens or Northwest Arkansas, we would appreciate your assistance with an experimental project designed to help people with disabilities enter the work force. In the next few weeks, we plan to take the following steps:

1. Identify high turnover/hard to fill or high employment potential positions in industry and business in Northwest Arkansas.
2. Identify the major tasks and production level standards of those jobs.
3. Institute vocational training in those positions at Abilities Unlimited Sheltered Workshop in Fayetteville.
4. Train workshop clients in the positions to insure that they can meet required job standards.
5. Recommend selected individuals for employment in participating industries.
6. Provide follow-up assistance to trainees and employers.

It would help us considerably if you would take a moment to complete the enclosed confidential survey and return it to us. The purpose of the survey is to learn more about employment opportunities in Northwest Arkansas. Completion and return of the survey or any further participation in this program in no way commits you to hiring any of our trainees. You are the best judge of a person's capability to meet your employment needs.

Research resulting from this project will discuss only general findings. No business or industry will be identified in any way by name. We will be happy to share with you the results of our study.

Thank you for taking time to read about our project. We are looking forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

Richard T. Roessler, Ph.D.
Professor of Rehabilitation
Education
Senior Research Scientist
Arkansas Rehabilitation
Research & Training Center

APPENDIX B

Employer Survey*

* Adapted from Rusch, F. & Mithaug, D.
Vocational training for mentally retarded adults.
Champaign, Ill.: Research Press, 1980.

Survey Reply Card

Name _____ Date _____

Company _____ Business Phone _____

Please check the appropriate box(es) below:

1) ☐ We have hired workers with disabilities in the past.

2) ☐ We have employees with disabilities currently on our payroll.

3) ☐ Overall, I believe that the program you are proposing will benefit people with disabilities.

4) ☐ In particular, I believe that your program will benefit our business.

5) ☐ Openings in hard to fill and/or high turnover jobs currently exist in our business. These positions include (list job titles and reasons why the jobs are hard to fill or have high turnover):

_____	_____
Job Title	Reasons
_____	_____
Job Title	Reasons
_____	_____
Job Title	Reasons

6) ☐ We anticipate job openings in the near future. Jobs for which we will be hiring include (list job titles):

_____

_____

_____

7) ☐ We would be willing to discuss details of your project; e.g., allowing you to study selected jobs listed in items five and six for purposes of implementing vocational training in that area at Abilities Unlimited Workshop.

8) ☐ We are currently not at full employment; approximately _____% (indicate percentage) of our work force has been laid off.

9) ☐ We are not interested in your project at the present time.

P. S. Please provide any recommendations that will help our program be more successful.

_____

_____

APPENDIX C

Narrative telephone questionnaire

and data recording sheet*

* Adapted from Rusch, F. & Mithaug, D.

Vocational training for mentally retarded adults.

Champaign, Ill.: Research Press, 1980.

NARRATIVE QUESTIONNAIRE FOR TELEPHONE SURVEY

My name is _____. I am representing the Arkansas Rehabilitation Research and Training Center at the University of Arkansas and Abilities Unlimited Sheltered Workshop of Northwest Arkansas. As you know, we contacted you recently regarding a vocational training program we are establishing in Northwest Arkansas. The purpose of the program is to identify hard to fill/high turnover and high employment potential positions in your business and train individuals with disabilities for these positions. The specific vocational training would be conducted at Abilities Unlimited Sheltered Workshop.

As you know, persons with disabilities have good attendance, safety, and production records; hence, they make excellent employees for areas where you are anticipating adding workers or areas where you've had difficulty retaining employees. Therefore, our plan is to identify jobs in local business and industry which are characterized by high turnover or high employment potential. For a select number of these jobs, we will initiate a vocational training/work adjustment training service at Abilities Unlimited. Workshop services will then result in a group of employment-ready individuals for industries to interview. Participating in our program in no way commits you to hiring any of our trainees, but I think you will find the project a welcome supplement to your current hiring practices.

Several weeks ago we sent you a letter describing our program. Did you receive the letter? (Question 1)

_____ Yes _____ No.

The purpose of the letter was to learn more about business and industry in Northwest Arkansas. In that regard, we would appreciate your help with a brief survey. Would you be willing to provide us with answers to a few brief questions?

(Question 2) _____ Yes _____ No.

Have you hired workers with disabilities in the past?

(Question 3) _____ Yes _____ No.

Do you currently have employees with disabilities on your payroll? (Question 4) _____ Yes _____ No.

Do you feel that this project will benefit people with disabilities? (Question 5) _____ Yes _____ No.

Do you feel that this project will benefit your business specifically? (Question 6) _____ Yes _____ No.

Do openings exist in hard to fill/high turnover jobs currently in your business? (Question 7) _____ Yes _____ No.

What are the job titles of these positions? (Question 7a)

_____

_____

_____

Do you anticipate job openings in the near future?

(Question 8) _____ Yes _____ No.

What are the job titles of these positions? (Question 8a)

_____

_____

_____

Would you be willing to discuss the details of our project in more detail, for example, allowing us to conduct an analysis of the jobs noted in the previous items for purposes of implementing vocational training in that area at Abilities Unlimited? (Question 9) _____ Yes _____ No.

What is a convenient time for us to contact you? (Question 10) _____

Are you currently at full employment? (Question 11) _____ Yes _____ No. If not, what percentage of your work force is laid off? _____% (enter percentage).

If this program is to succeed, what recommendations would you have for us? (Question 12) _____

_____

_____

Thank you very much for your time.

TELEPHONE SURVEY RECORD

Company _____ Date _____

Interviewer _____ Interviewee _____

Responses to Questions:

Question 1 - ____Yes ____No

Question 2 - ____Yes ____No

Question 3 - ____Yes ____No

Question 4 - ____Yes ____No

Question 5 - ____Yes ____No

Question 6 - ____Yes ____No

Question 7 - ____Yes ____No

Question 7a - Job Titles: _____

_____

_____

Question 8 - ____Yes ____No

Question 8a - Job Titles: _____

_____

_____

Question 9 - ____Yes ____No

Question 10 - Convenient time _____

Question 11 - ___Yes ____No _____% Laid off

Question 12 - Recommendations: _____

_____

_____

_____